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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

BBC and other oil and gas operators have proposed to develop the oil and gas resources of the West Tavaputs Plateau (WTP) Project Area in Duchesne and Carbon Counties, Utah, approximately 30 miles east-northeast of Price, Utah. BBC's and other operators' purpose for the WTP project is to exercise their valid lease rights and extract the leased natural gas from the subsurface, thereby increasing the available supply of domestic natural gas by a daily delivery of approximately 250 million standard cubic feet per day (MMscf/day). The operators must fulfill their obligations and responsibilities under Federal leases to explore, develop, and produce commercial quantities of hydrocarbons.

The WTP Project Area is bounded on three sides by natural features – on the west by Sheep Canyon, on the north by Nine Mile Canyon, and on the east by the Green River. The southern boundary of the WTP Project Area is a straight line reflecting an anticline in the sub-surface that limits the southern extent of the natural gas resources targeted by the project.

Surface ownership in the 137,930-acre WTP Project Area is approximately 87 percent Federal (managed by the BLM), approximately 8 percent State of Utah (managed by State Institutional Trust Lands Administration [SITLA]), and approximately 5 percent private (see **Table 1.1-1**). Mineral ownership closely parallels surface ownership.

The WTP Project Area includes portions of the Desolation Canyon and Jack Canyon Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Existing leases within the WSAs were issued prior to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. The 137,930-acre WTP Project Area includes about 24,668 acres of the Desolation Canyon WSA and 7,480 acres of the Jack Canyon WSA. The Proposed Action includes up to 43 proposed well pads within the WSAs. The WTP Project Area also involves two Federal oil and gas units, the Peter's Point and Prickly Pear Units in Townships 11-13 South, Ranges 13-18 East, Salt Lake Meridian.

During the public scoping process for this EIS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), State of Utah, Carbon County, Duchesne County, Uintah County, and the BIA-Uintah and Ouray Agency were invited to be Cooperating Agencies (CAs) on this EIS. The EPA, USFWS, State of Utah, Carbon County, Duchesne County, and Uintah County agreed to participate as CAs and have acted as such throughout the EIS process. The USACE, DOT, and BIA declined to participate as formal CAs, but agreed to participate as informal cooperators primarily in a review capacity.

In addition to formally inviting the above-mentioned agencies to participate as CAs, 27 Native American Tribal organizations were also invited to formally participate as consulting parties to the EIS. No Tribe elected to participate as a consulting party to the EIS; however, Government-to-Government Tribal consultation has been ongoing throughout the EIS process. In addition to Tribal consultation specific to the EIS process under NEPA, interested Tribes were invited to participate in development of the

Programmatic Agreement (WTP PA), which was completed between January 2009 and January 2010 (see **Chapter 6.0** and **Appendix T**).

Preparation of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was initiated with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on August 26, 2005. Its preparation is preceded by multiple oil- and gas-related actions in the WTP Project Area and their associated NEPA documents, most notably the Stone Cabin 3-D Seismic Survey Project Environmental Assessment (EA) (UT-070-2003-15) completed in 2004, and the West Tavaputs Plateau Drilling Program EA (UT-070-2004-28), also completed in 2004. Others include the Burris 1-10 Well and Right of Way EA (UT-066-97-55), the Wasatch Oil and Gas Claybank Springs Well Developments EA (UT-070-2000-66), and the Wasatch Peters Point 3A Gas Well EA (UT-070-2001-05). These analyses evaluated impacts from seismic exploration and exploratory drilling projects designed to identify oil and gas resources within the WTP Project Area.

The prospective nature of the area identified for drilling within this EIS is based on 3D seismic data, geologic information, and data derived from wells drilled to date. These data are still limited for large portions of the WTP Project Area, thus it should be noted that this proposal contains a combination of exploratory actions and full-field development.

Since publication of the NOI, natural gas development within the WTP has continued under authorizations based on the previous NEPA analyses and provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act provides for the statutory categorical exclusion (CX) of certain oil and gas development activities from NEPA analysis. In addition, three EAs were prepared to evaluate limited interim drilling activities within the Project Area, which were provided for through subsequent decisions. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1506.1), which direct Federal agencies on the implementation of NEPA, provide for such limited actions to occur in the interim while an EIS is under preparation. Since the NOI was published the BLM has approved natural gas wells in the WTP Project Area through the use of statutory CXs. In 2009 however, the BLM suspended evaluation or approval of WTP natural gas wells via statutory CX until such time as the ROD for this EIS is signed. In order to provide the most conservative analysis of overall effects from the development of natural gas resources within the WTP Project Area, these interim actions (i.e., including wells approved and now producing since the time of the NOI) are included in the Proposed Action and the EIS analyses.

Table 1.1-1 Land Ownership within the WTP Project Area	
Land Ownership	Total Project Area¹ (% of WTP Project Area)
BLM	~120,206 acres (87%)
State	~10,410 acres (8%)
Private	~7,292 acres (5%)
Total	~137,930

¹ Slight discrepancies between surface owner acreages and total Project Area due to GIS software "clipping" overlap between surface owners.

% = percent

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The BLM's underlying need for this project is to respond to the applicant's proposal to exercise valid existing rights by developing natural gas resources from Federal oil and gas leases on the West Tavaputs Plateau in accordance with its multiple-use mandate, the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA) of 1920 as amended by the FLPMA, and the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987.

The MLA, as amended, provides that exploration and development of domestic oil and gas is in the best interest of the United States. The intent of the MLA and its implementing regulations is to allow, and essentially encourage, lessees or potential lessees to explore for oil and gas or other mineral reserves on Federally-administered lands.

The BLM is also directed by the FLPMA to manage public lands for multiple use including recreation, conservation, wildlife habitat, development of timber and forest products, livestock grazing, and energy and mineral production such as the WTP proposal. The BLM must consider the proposal for exploratory actions and full field development of natural gas resources on the West Tavaputs Plateau in a manner that meets the multiple use mandate of the agency, and sustains the health and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM will consider approval of the proposed drilling in a manner that reduces impacts on sensitive areas such as Nine Mile and Desolation Canyons, and wildlife resources throughout the WTP Project Area, consistent with the lease rights granted to the applicant.

1.3 THE EIS DECISION FRAMEWORK

This EIS is prepared in accordance with the NEPA and in compliance with the CEQ regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), USDOl requirements (Department Manual 516, Environmental Quality), and guidelines listed in the BLM NEPA Guidebook (BLM 2004a).

According to the terms of the MLA, the BLM is authorized to manage Federal mineral interests underlying Federal or split estate lands. Approximately 87 percent of the surface of the WTP Project Area and 87 percent of the mineral interests underlying the WTP Project Area are owned by the United States and administered by the BLM. Therefore, the BLM is the lead agency in this process, and Federal jurisdiction of the WTP natural gas full field development proposal is assumed by the BLM, which will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) for this EIS.

Within the ROD, the BLM decision maker (i.e., the BLM Utah State Director) will determine:

- Whether the Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the applicable land use plan and programmatic plans developed under NEPA, or if the applicable land use plan requires amending (see Section 1.5);
- Whether the analysis contained within this EIS is adequate for the purposes of reaching informed decisions regarding the WTP natural gas full field development Proposed Action and alternatives;

- Whether to approve the Proposed Action, select a different alternative, or select a combination of alternatives;
- The Conditions of Approval (COAs) that may be attached to the ROD and any individual permit issued subsequent to the ROD.

1.4 SUBSEQUENT DECISIONS TO BE MADE

If the BLM decides to approve the proposed WTP natural gas full field development project, the BLM would be required to review and act on Surface Use Plans (SUPs), which are an integral component of Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) and right of way (ROW) applications, which seek approval to construct pipelines, drill pads and roads, or other ancillary facilities associated with project development. Submission and approval of such applications are required prior to surface disturbance. The APD and ROW grant processes are discussed further in the following sections.

While this EIS provides analysis of development on unleased lands within the WTP Project Area, the ROD for this EIS will not include a decision to lease any specific parcel within the WTP Project Area. Through the BLM's competitive leasing process, rather, the BLM may utilize the analysis in this EIS to evaluate nominated parcels and then make leasing decisions in separate decision documents.

The leasing, APD, and ROW grant processes are discussed further in the following sections.

1.4.1 Oil and Gas Leasing Process

BLM Utah conducts competitive oil and gas lease sales quarterly in accordance with Federal law. Lease parcels are made up of lands that have been determined to be open for leasing through BLM's land use planning process, and are either nominated or requested by the public. Leasing enables companies to secure rights to mineral resources before investing in geophysical testing and other kinds of exploratory techniques to determine if development is economically feasible. Once parcels are leased, operators are required to submit exploration or development proposals APDs to BLM for an environmental analysis and application of measures to mitigate impacts prior to any implementation of such proposals.

1.4.2 APD Process

An operator can initiate the APD process either by filing an APD or a Notice of Staking (NOS). The NOS consists of an overview of the operator's proposal, including a location map and a sketched site plan. The APD includes the site-specific SUP and drilling program. The detailed information required to be submitted for each APD is identified in Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 and 43 CFR 3162.3.

The BLM is responsible for approving a project proponent's APD, including both the SUP and subsurface drilling program, and applying appropriate mitigation measures, or COAs, for affected resources, as necessary, on BLM-administered lands or minerals. Prior to approving an APD, the BLM must comply with NEPA and consider the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. The environmental review includes an onsite inspection of the proposed well, access road, and pipeline locations, as well as

other areas of proposed surface use. The purpose of the onsite inspection is to identify site-specific environmental impacts and to identify avoidance techniques or other mitigation measures. The onsite inspection could, for example, include site-specific surveys for cultural and paleontological resources or threatened and endangered species if the potential for these resources exists on or near the proposed disturbance. After the onsite inspection is performed, the project proponent would submit the APD or would revise the APD. Additional mitigation measures (e.g., adjusting the proposed locations of well sites, roads, and pipelines to avoid a sensitive resource; identifying specific construction methods to be employed; or identifying reclamation standards) may be added as COAs to protect affected resources.

After drilling, routine well operations would not require approval; however, the BLM would have approval authority for operational activities that may alter the specifications of an approved APD, certain subsequent well operations, disposal of water produced from Federal leases, and new surface disturbances (e.g., workover pits). The BLM also retains the authority to approve plugging and abandonment of wells, gas venting, gas flaring, and certain measures for handling production. Other permits, approvals, authorizing actions, and consultations required by Federal, State and local agencies are discussed in **Section 1.6**.

1.4.3 Right of Way Process

Operators are required to submit a ROW application to obtain approval to construct a pipeline, well pad, road, or ancillary facility located on BLM-administered lands outside of the lease or unit on which the proposed project is to be conducted. APDs and Sundry Notices are often acceptable as applications for ROW grants for off-lease facilities if they provide sufficient detail about the entire proposal. Most of the proposed project would lie within the unit boundaries of the Peter's Point Unit or Prickly Pear Unit; however, project development would require that BBC and other operators secure the necessary ROWs to facilitate access by road and transportation of produced gas to processing facilities outside of the unit boundaries.

1.5 CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLANS

The BLM land use planning decisions for Federal lands and minerals within the WTP Project Area are contained in the following documents, which became effective on October 31, 2008:

- Price Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (BLM 2008b)
- Vernal Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (BLM 2008d).

Of these land use plans, the Price Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) is the applicable plan for approximately 94 percent of the WTP Project Area, including all lands within Carbon County. The Vernal Field Office Approved RMP is the applicable plan for the remainder of the lands in the WTP Project Area, including lands within Duchesne and Uintah Counties.

FLPMA requires that the BLM “develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans.” Under BLM land use planning requirements established by Sections 201 and 202 of the FLPMA (43 U.S.C. 1711- 1712) and the regulations in 43 CFR 1600, existing land use plans decisions must remain in effect during the land use plan revision process until the revision is completed and approved.

This project-specific EIS was initiated in August of 2005. Consistent with the above-mentioned regulations, the WTP Draft EIS (DEIS), which was released in February of 2008, contained an evaluation of consistency of the Proposed Action and alternatives with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the Price River MFP (BLM 1984a) and the Diamond Mountain RMP (BLM 1994b). These documents were, at the time, the existing and approved plans for the WTP Project Area. In order to provide for full field development under these plans, it was also determined when this project was initiated that a MFP amendment would be necessary for certain resource decisions if at the time of WTP ROD the Price MFP was still the guiding land use document for the Price Field Office. Thus, from the onset of this project the BLM has followed the regulations that guide preparation of plan amendments found in 43 CFR 1600 and 40 CFR 1500.

Although this process was started under the umbrella of the Price River MFP and the Diamond Mountain RMP, the BLM was aware that land use plan revisions for both Price and Vernal were ongoing. Therefore, during the alternatives development process for this EIS, the BLM carefully considered a range of alternatives that were consistent with those being considered in the ongoing RMPs/EISs. Specifically, alternatives in the WTP DEIS were developed with the understanding that (1) a “mid-EIS” change in land use plans was possible if the revised land use plans were completed prior to the ROD for the WTP EIS; and (2) the BLM had a responsibility to assure that a decision on the WTP full field development plan would not preclude options considered in the RMP revisions, or prejudice the ultimate decision, should the WTP EIS be completed prior to the revised plans.

Based on a number of circumstances largely beyond agency control, completion of the Price and Vernal land use plan revisions and the WTP FEIS have taken the BLM more time than expected. These unforeseeable situations have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the BLM to project the order of document completion. For instance, it was originally thought that the Price and Vernal land use plan revisions would be completed prior to the ROD for the WTP EIS. However, in order to thoroughly analyze lands considered to be eligible for wilderness characteristics management, the BLM prepared a Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS for both the Price and Vernal areas. These supplemental draft RMP/EISs resulted in a considerable time delay in the overall land use plan revision process for both field offices. After determining that the BLM had to supplement the RMPs, it was anticipated that the ROD for the WTP EIS would be completed prior to the land use plan revisions. However, subsequent to release of the WTP DEIS, the EPA changed the NAAQS threshold for ground-level ozone. As a result of the lowered NAAQS for ozone, the predicted cumulative values contained in the WTP DEIS exceeded the new NAAQS. In view of the cumulative ozone levels that were predicted under the Proposed Action and alternatives within the DEIS, the BLM concluded that project-specific ozone modeling needed to be completed for the FEIS. Completion of the ozone modeling assessment (i.e., a time consuming photochemical grid modeling effort) postponed release of this FEIS. In addition, in January of 2009, the BLM initiated the WTP PA process with multiple consulting parties to address adverse effects of the WTP project on historic properties from the WTP project. This landmark

agreement took over one year to complete. The information from the WTP PA has been added to the Agency Preferred Alternative of this FEIS.

Given the uncertainty on the timing of the two land use plan revisions and the WTP EIS, and in an effort not to rule out options within the EIS, the BLM retained the option of an MFP amendment by providing the public with a 90-day comment period as is required by land use planning regulations. However, given that both the Price and Vernal Field Offices now have Approved RMPs, a land use plan amendment is no longer necessary for the WTP EIS.

While this and other sections of the WTP EIS have been modified to discuss conformance with the Price and Vernal Approved RMPs, it should be noted that information from the Diamond Mountain RMP, the Price River MFP, and inventories conducted subsequent to the publication of the Price MFP (which were used to describe the affected environment and provided a baseline for the impact analyses) have not been updated to include all findings and decisions from the recently approved RMPs. The BLM determined that updating this information is unnecessary because the analysis contained within this EIS is based on a more conservative baseline than the decisions included in Approved RMPs. For example:

- The visual resource impact assessment is based on an inventory conducted subsequent to the publication of the Price River MFP and the Diamond Mountain RMP. However, the Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications for the WTP Project Area included in the Approved RMPs for the Price and Vernal Field Offices are less restrictive than those that were used for analysis purposes.
- Impacts to the Nine Mile Canyon ACEC were based on the largest boundary of the potential ACEC which was being considered for designation in the Price RMP/EIS. However, the Nine Mile Canyon ACEC, as designated in the Approved Plan for the Price Field Office, covers a much smaller area than that which was analyzed.
- Within the range of alternatives being considered in the WTP EIS the BLM evaluated the effects of restricting winter-time drilling and completion activities within big game crucial habitats between November 1 and May 15 as was required by the Price River MFP. Within the Approved Plan for the Price Field Office, winter timing limitations have been changed to December 1 to April 15, which is less restrictive than what was analyzed.

This EIS also includes an assessment of the impacts of development on a number of special designations which were considered within the RMP/EISs, but were not carried forward in the RODs for the Approved RMPs (e.g., designation of Nine Mile Creek as suitable for inclusion in the Nation Wild and Scenic Rivers System, designation of the Desolation Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and protection and preservation of the Jack and Desolation Canyon non-WSA lands with wilderness character). Although these special designations were not carried forward in the RODs for the Approved RMPs, impacts to these areas are still considered within the WTP EIS. Reference to these areas has not been deleted because their inclusion directly responds to issues and concerns brought forward by the public and cooperating agencies during the scoping period and public comment period for the WTP DEIS.

Finally, while some of the information contained in this document may no longer be applicable within the context of the new RMPs, the discussion on environmental consequences is focused on the issues that are truly relevant to the action in question. Information provided within the environmental consequences section provides the decision maker with the information necessary to compare and contrast the predicted effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives and make a reasoned and informed decision regarding which alternative or course of action, or combination of alternatives should be selected in the ROD.

1.5.1 Conformance with the Price Field Office Approved RMP

The range of alternatives analyzed in this EIS adequately covers the goals, objectives, and management decisions contained within the Approved RMP. Specifically, the Agency Preferred Alternative contained within this EIS has been designed to be in conformance with the Approved RMP for Price Field Office (BLM 2008b). While certain components of the Proposed Action and other alternatives may not be in conformance with the Approved RMP, the selected alternative in the ROD could consist of a combination of the alternatives that that were analyzed in detail.

1.5.2 Conformance with the Vernal Field Office Approved RMP

The proposed full field development plan would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office Approved RMP (BLM 2008d), which provides for management of BLM-administered public lands in Duchesne County and portions of Uintah County.

1.6 CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS, STATUTES, AND OBJECTIVES

1.6.1 Consistency with State of Utah Objectives

Portions of the WTP Project Area are owned by the State of Utah. State lands within the WTP Project Area are managed by SITLA. Because SITLA's objectives are to produce funding for the State school system, the proposed development is consistent with the objectives of the State.

1.6.2 Consistency with County Plans

The *Carbon County Master Plan* (Carbon County 2005b) set a goal that resource development activities on public lands within the county be fully bonded for all estimated reclamation costs (separate from Federal performance bonds). The area of Carbon County associated with the Proposed Action is regulated as M&G-1, Mining and Grazing, and has been reviewed and approved for Non-Conditional Use by the Carbon County Planning and Zoning Board; therefore, the Proposed Action is in compliance with the *Carbon County Master Plan*.

The Proposed Action would be in compliance with the *Duchesne County General Plan* (2005). The Duchesne County General Plan supports management of public lands for multiple use, sustained yields, prevention of waste of natural resources, and to protect the health and welfare of the public. The plan emphasizes the importance of access to and across public lands for resource management and development. The plan encourages the proper management of public lands for fish, wildlife, livestock

production, timber harvest, recreation, energy production, mineral extraction and the preservation of natural scenic, scientific and historical values.

The portions of the WTP Project Area within Uintah County are guided by the *Uintah County General Plan* (Uintah County Plan) (Uintah County 2005). The Uintah County Plan emphasizes multiple-use public land management practices, responsible use, and optimum utilization of public land resources. Multiple-use is defined in the plan as including, but not limited to, the following historically and traditionally practiced resource uses: grazing, recreation, timber, mining, oil and gas development, agriculture, wildlife habitat, and water resources, as they become available or as new technology allows.

As previously discussed, Carbon, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties are Cooperating Agencies on this EIS.

1.6.3 Consistency with Other Laws and Objectives

The Proposed Action and alternatives would be in compliance with various Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, and the operators would procure any required permits or easements (**Table 1.6-1**). The alternatives meet the requirements of the MLA and 43 CFR (Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing). Under this authority, BBC and other operators have the right to drill for and produce oil and gas on their valid leases.

1.7 SCOPING OF ISSUES

1.7.1 Identified Issues

The BLM conducted public scoping to solicit input and identification of environmental issues and concerns associated with BBC's and other operators' Proposed Action. The public scoping process was initiated on August 26, 2005 with the publication of the NOI in the Federal Register. The BLM prepared a scoping information notice and provided copies of it to Federal, State, and local agencies, numerous Tribes, and general public. Announcements of the scoping opportunities were sent to the Vernal Express, Uinta Basin Standard, Deseret News, Emery County Progress, Price Sun Advocate, Denver Post, and Salt Lake Tribune for publication; local and Utah radio stations for publication; and Channel 3 (i.e., the local Price television station), for announcement. These announcements included information on public scoping and information open houses, which were held October 18, 2005 at the Holiday Inn in Price; October 19, 2005 at the Museum of Ancient Life in Lehi; and October 20, 2005 at the Roosevelt Campus of Utah State University in Roosevelt. The official scoping period ended November 4, 2005 (within 15 days after the final public meeting). In addition to conducting public scoping, the BLM has conducted considerable internal scoping, which has been open and ongoing throughout the EIS process.

On February 1, 2008, a (Notice of Availability) NOA announcing the availability the DEIS for a 90-day public comment period was published in the Federal Register (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>) and the EPA's Federal Register of Environmental Documents (<http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/>). CDs containing an electronic copy of the DEIS were mailed to all parties that provided scoping comments. Each CD packet included a postcard describing the public comment period, how to submit comments, where to submit comments, and when to submit comments. Paper copies of the DEIS

were distributed to all CAs and interested organizations and individuals. An electronic copy of the DEIS was also made available for download on the Price Field Office's project website. Additional paper and CD copies were made available for the public at the Price Field Office. On February 27, 2008, the BLM issued a press release announcing public meetings for the DEIS; which were held on March 11, 2008 at the Utah State University Campus in Roosevelt; March 12, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in Price; and March 13, 2008 at the Salt Lake City Library in Salt Lake City. The public comment period officially closed on May 1, 2008. During the DEIS public comment period, the Price Field Office received approximately 58,000 comment letters from other Federal agencies, State and local governments, Indian Tribes, and the interested public.

Following the DEIS public comment period and in response to public concerns about cultural resources, the BLM invited all organizations and individuals that had previously expressed interest in being consulting parties for the EIS to participate as consulting parties for development of a WTP PA. Those that were invited and elected to participate include the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), Nine Mile Canyon Coalition (NMCC), Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA), Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance (CPAA), Utah Statewide Archaeological Society (USAS), Barrier Canyon Style (BCS) Project, Utah Professional Archaeological Council (UPAC) and Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA). In addition to these organizations, the BLM, ACHP, SHPO, Bill Barrett Corporation, State of Utah's Governor's Office, Carbon and Duchesne counties, and SITLA also contributed to development of the WTP PA. All Tribes that had previously shown interest in the WTP EIS were also invited to join in development of the WTP PA. However, only the Ute Indian Tribe elected to take part.

Substantive issues and concerns that were identified during the public and internal scoping process, the public comment period for the DEIS, and the WTP PA process are addressed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of this FEIS and are summarized below.

1.7.1.1 Air Quality

- Construction, drilling, completion, and operation activities could lead to increased criteria pollutant emissions.
- Diesel engine emissions from vehicles, drill rig engines, and other equipment could result in adverse air quality impacts near roads and well sites.
- Fugitive dust from construction and operation activities could lead to exceedances of ambient air quality standards for PM10 and PM2.5.
- The Proposed Action could impact air quality related values, such as visibility and acid deposition, at nearby Class I areas.
- Project emissions could lead to an increase in ozone.
- Project activities could lead to increased ambient air concentrations of hazardous air pollutants.

1.7.1.2 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

- Development within existing Nine Mile Canyon ACEC has the potential to impact the relevant and important values for which the area was designated (e.g., cultural, recreational, visual, and wildlife).

- Development within the potential Nine Mile Canyon and Desolation Canyon ACECs could impact the relevant and important values for which the ACECs were nominated.
- Development within the potential ACECs could prevent the BLM from designating these areas in the future.

1.7.1.3 Cultural Resources

- The proposed development could have direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to petroglyphs, pre-historic habitation, and historic resources in the WTP Project Area specifically due to increased traffic, noise, and infrastructure.
- The proposed development could impact sites that are eligible or have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Oil and gas exploration, development, and production could result in changes to the cultural setting, particularly in Nine Mile Canyon.
- The accumulation of dust and/or dust suppressants could change petroglyph and pictograph clarity.
- Increased access to the WTP Project Area could increase vandalism, looting, and unauthorized off highway vehicle (OHV) use in the WTP Project Area.

1.7.1.4 Geology and Minerals

- Construction of well pads and other project facilities could change the topographic character of the WTP Project Area.
- Development could increase the potential for landslides and rock falls.
- Development could potentially conflict with future oil shale and tar sands production.
- Development could deplete existing sand and gravel quarries.

1.7.1.5 Invasive, Non-native Species

- The proposed development could result in the spread and introduction of noxious weeds into the WTP Project Area along roadways and other disturbed areas.

1.7.1.6 Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive Plant Species

- Construction of well pads, roads, pipelines and other facilities could result in a loss or fragmentation of suitable habitat for the Uinta Basin hookless cactus or Graham's beardtongue.
- Access into previously inaccessible areas could potentially lead to illegal collection of the Uinta Basin hookless cactus.
- Increased sedimentation could potentially cause loss of or modify suitable habitat for the Uinta Basin hookless cactus or Graham's beardtongue.

1.7.1.7 Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species

- Construction of well pads, roads, pipelines and other facilities as well as increased human activity could result in a loss of foraging habitat including USFWS-designated critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl (MSO).
- Increased noise levels and artificial lighting could limit use of potential nesting and hunting areas for MSO.
- Water depletion, sedimentation, and chemical spills into the Green River could impact the endangered Colorado River fish.

1.7.1.8 Water Quality and Quantity (Surface and Ground)

- The proposed development could impact surface and groundwater quality, including rivers, creeks, streams, springs, and aquifers.
- Hydraulic fracturing from the proposed development could impact groundwater and drinking water sources and springs.
- Magnesium chloride used in the proposed development for dust suppression could impact surface water and shallow groundwater quality.
- The proposed development could reduce the flow from natural springs and seeps.
- Development could negatively impact the proper functioning condition of floodplains.
- Use of water resources for dust suppression and drilling/completion could reduce the flows of Nine Mile Creek and the Green River.
- Development would result in increased salinity in the Colorado River system.

1.7.1.9 Wetlands/Riparian Zones

- Surface disturbing activities could result in a loss of riparian vegetation and degrade the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) of riparian habitat.
- Surface disturbing activities could impact the viability of wetland communities and the function of the system.

1.7.1.10 Wild and Scenic Rivers

- The proposed development could impact the outstandingly remarkable values and tentative classifications of Nine Mile Creek and the Green River and prevent them from being included in the National Wild and Scenic River (WSR) system.

1.7.1.11 Wilderness Study Areas

- Development within WSAs has the potential to impact the wilderness values of Jack and Desolation Canyons (e.g., size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and supplemental values).

- Development within the Jack and Desolation Canyon WSAs could impair wilderness suitability and prevent future congressional designation.
- Development in WSAs is inconsistent with the BLM's non-impairment criteria.

1.7.1.12 Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

- Development within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics has the potential to impact constituent elements for which these areas were nominated.

1.7.1.13 Livestock Grazing

- The proposed development could result in the loss of available forage.
- The proposed development could result in changes to existing range facilities and increased difficulties in management of herds.
- Increased traffic levels could result in increased vehicle collisions with livestock herds.

1.7.1.14 Vegetation Including Special Status Plants Other than USFWS Candidate or Listed Species

- Surface disturbance would result in the direct loss of vegetation in the WTP Project Area.
- Construction of well pads, roads, pipelines and other facilities could result in the loss or fragmentation of suitable habitat for the Graham's beardtongue.
- Increased dust from traffic and construction could degrade productivity of vegetative communities and suitable habitat for the Graham's beardtongue.
- The use of dust suppression, including the use of magnesium chloride could impact vegetation adjacent to treated roads.

1.7.1.15 Fish and Wildlife Including Special Status Wildlife Other than USFWS Candidate or Listed Species (e.g., Migratory Birds)

- The construction of well pads, roads, pipelines, and other facilities would cause loss and fragmentation of habitat for wildlife species including elk, mule deer, sage-grouse, and other species.
- Year-round drilling and completion activities could cause displacement of elk, mule deer, and sage-grouse from winter use areas.
- The construction of well pads, roads, pipelines, and other facilities and increased human activity could result in temporary displacement of migratory birds, including raptors, from nesting and foraging habitats.
- The proposed development could result in contact of migratory birds with petroleum-based products contained in reserve pits and water management facilities.
- The proposed development could result in asphyxiation of migratory birds in heater-treaters or open-fired vessels.

- The proposed development could result in direct habitat loss or temporary displacement of bald eagles from roosting and foraging areas.
- Increased traffic could potentially result in vehicle collisions with carrion feeding bald and golden eagles.

1.7.1.16 Soils

- Removal of vegetation, mixing of soil horizons, and soil compaction could have a negative impact on soil productivity.
- Disturbance of soils could increase their susceptibility to wind and water erosion and subsequent sedimentation.
- Development could lead to contamination of soils with petroleum products.
- Surface disturbance could cause destruction of biological soil crusts within the WTP Project Area.

1.7.1.17 Recreation

- Development would increase motorized access into previously inaccessible areas reducing opportunities for primitive recreation.
- Development could diminish recreational experiences within the Nine Mile and Desolation Canyon Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs).
- Development could change the experience of the visitors traveling the Nine Mile Canyon Backcountry Byway.
- Noise from development could diminish recreational experiences within Desolation Canyon NHL.
- Development could reduce opportunities for high-quality hunting in limited entry areas.
- Proposed gating of roads under select alternatives could impact recreational opportunities and experiences.

1.7.1.18 Visual Resources

- The addition of wells, roads, pipelines, and gas production facilities would adversely affect the visual character of the landscape.
- Proposed development could be inconsistent with existing VRM classifications, particularly in VRM class I and II areas.
- The visual landscape as seen from sensitive viewpoints could be substantially degraded.
- Lighting of drill rigs and other surface facilities may be visible from long viewing distances.

1.7.1.19 Paleontology

- The proposed development could lead to the loss of scientifically important Green River Formation vertebrate fossils.

1.7.1.20 Socioeconomics

- The proposed development could create the need for additional housing and public facilities and services (e.g., law enforcement, emergency, and health care services).
- The proposed development could help in meeting the nation's demand for natural gas, reducing costs of natural gas, and contribute to the national, State, and local economy.
- The proposed development would result in the creation of employment opportunities and public revenue streams (e.g., taxes and royalties) during the LOP.
- The proposed development could change the rural character of local communities surrounding the WTP Project Area.
- Rapid growth associated with development could create a short-term and disruptive boom in Duchesne, Uintah, and Carbon Counties.
- Proposed development could have an adverse impact on other economic sectors (e.g., ranching operations and recreational and cultural tourism).

1.7.1.21 Transportation

- Increased traffic could cause dust generation, vehicle emissions, road congestion, noise, accelerated deterioration of roads, and increased potential for vehicle accidents.
- Construction and widening of access roads could increase soil erosion, modify the visual landscape, impact paleo-geologic and cultural resources, and cause habitat fragmentation.
- Existing roads in the WTP Project Area were not designed for the proposed level of development and are not in compliance with the BLM road safety standards.
- Alternative access routes should be considered that would reduce the amount of vehicle traffic in Nine Mile Canyon.

1.7.1.22 Health and Safety

- Increased traffic could lead to more traffic accidents within the WTP Project Area.
- Proposed development and associated traffic could possibly affect emergency response time.
- Health and safety could be impacted from leaks and spills, on-site storage of hazardous materials, the content of reserve pits, and venting/flaring of toxic gases.
- Vehicle emissions and dust could impact human health.

1.7.1.23 Wild Horses

- The proposed development could result in a loss and fragmentation of winter range on Flat Iron Mesa and Cedar Ridge within the Range Creek Horse Management Area.
- Proposed development on benches and along ridge lines could alter wild horse migration routes between winter and summer grounds.
- Increased vehicles access could result in harassment of wild horses.

1.7.1.24 Noise

- The proposed development would result in increased ambient noise levels within the WTP Project Area as a result of construction, drilling, completion, and production activities. Increased noise levels could adversely affect wildlife and recreational experiences.

1.7.2 Environmental Issues/Resources Addressed by Supplemental Authorities

The BLM has considered the type and magnitude of potential impacts to the following issues and resources also addressed by supplemental authorities.

Water Quality	Air Quality
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Rangeland Standards
Farmlands, Prime and Unique	Cultural Resources
Threatened and Endangered Species	ACECs
Paleontological Resources	WSAs
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Native American Trust Resources
Hazardous Materials/Waste	Environmental Justice
Migratory Birds	Native American Religious Concerns
Floodplains	

Prime or unique farmlands and designated wilderness do not occur within the WTP Project Area and, therefore, are not addressed further in this EIS. The remaining 15 issues/resources are discussed and analyzed in the Affected Environment (Chapter 3), Environmental Consequences (Chapter 4), and Cumulative Impacts (Chapter 5) chapters of this EIS.

Table 1.6-1 Major Federal, State, and Local Permits and Approvals Applicable to the Proposed Action and Alternatives	
AGENCY	PERMIT, APPROVAL, OR ACTION
Federal Agency	
Bureau of Land Management	<p>Permits to drill, deepen, or plug back on BLM-managed land (APD/Sundry Notice process)</p> <p>ROW grants and temporary use permits for pipelines on BLM-managed land</p> <p>ROW grants for access roads on BLM-managed land</p> <p>Authorization for flaring and venting of natural gas on BLM-managed land</p> <p>Plugging and abandonment of a well on BLM-managed land</p> <p>Modification of Category 2 lease stipulations</p> <p>Antiquities, cultural and historic resource permits on BLM-managed land</p> <p>Paleontological resource use permits</p> <p>Approval to dispose of produced water on BLM-managed land</p> <p>Pesticide use permits</p> <p>Noxious Weed Act enforcement</p> <p>Initiation of Section 7 consultation with USFWS</p> <p>Mineral material sales permits</p>
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Section 404 permits for placement of dredged or fill material in area waters and adjacent wetlands
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	<p>ESA Section 7 consultation, coordination, and impact review on Federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) species</p> <p>Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald Eagle Protection Act consultations</p> <p>Section 404 permit consultation</p>

Table 1.6-1 Major Federal, State, and Local Permits and Approvals Applicable to the Proposed Action and Alternatives	
AGENCY	PERMIT, APPROVAL, OR ACTION
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	<p>The ACHP assisted with Section 106 cultural resource compliance; coordinated with Utah State Historic Preservation Office</p> <p>The ACHP was a signatory to the WTP PA through consultation developed under Section 106 of the NHPA</p>
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 (EPA)	<p>Review and comment on major Federal actions</p> <p>Underground Injection Control permits (through Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining)</p> <p>Air quality permits</p>
U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)	<p>Approval of construction and operation of natural gas pipelines</p> <p>Transport permits</p> <p>Encroachment permits</p>
U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms	Explosives user permits
State Agency	
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)	<p>Section 404 permit process participation and coordination on impacts to fish and wildlife and State-sensitive species</p> <p>ROW grants for construction activities on UDWR lands</p> <p>Consistency with essential elements of wildlife mitigation strategy</p>
Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (UDFFSL)	ROW grants for construction activities on State lands
Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Quality (UDEQ/DWQ)	<p>Utah Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (UPDES) stormwater construction permits</p> <p>UPDES construction dewatering permits</p> <p>Section 401 CWA water quality certification stream and wetland crossings</p>

Table 1.6-1 Major Federal, State, and Local Permits and Approvals Applicable to the Proposed Action and Alternatives	
AGENCY	PERMIT, APPROVAL, OR ACTION
	Stream alteration permits Solid and hazardous waste control
Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality (UDEQ/DAQ)	Approval orders and permits for compressors and other stationary emissions sources Air quality permits to construct New Source Review permits Fugitive dust control
Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)	Heavy equipment transport permits Permits for utility crossings of State roads
Utah Division of Water Rights (UDWR)	Stream alteration permits Change in nature of use of water applications
Utah Public Lands Policy Coordination Office (PLPCO)	The PLPCO was a signatory to the WTP PA through consultation developed under Section 106 of the NHPA
Utah Division of State History, Preservation Section (State Historic Preservation Office)	Section 106 consultation for cultural resource clearances, inventories, evaluation, and mitigation The SHPO was a signatory to the WTP PA through consultation developed under Section 106 of the NHPA
Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration	ROW easements on State Trust Lands Compliance with applicable general and program rules
Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining	Permits to drill, deepen, or re-enter and operate oil and gas or disposal wells Underground Injection Control Permits (on behalf of EPA) Pressure monitoring and well spacing Disposal facility permits

Table 1.6-1 Major Federal, State, and Local Permits and Approvals Applicable to the Proposed Action and Alternatives	
AGENCY	PERMIT, APPROVAL, OR ACTION
	Permits to flare natural gas Compliance with safety regulations for oil and gas activities
Utah State Engineer's Office	Water well permits
Local Government	
Carbon and Duchesne Counties	County zoning/land use plan consultation Special use and conditional use permits Encroachment permits County bonds Road conditional use and opening permits Solid waste disposal permits Construction permits and licenses Noxious Weed Act enforcement Carbon and Duchesne counties were signatories to the WTP PA through consultation developed under Section 106 of the NHPA